

Recommendations for Families

If you're concerned that a member of your household may be suicidal, there are steps you can take to help keep them safe.

Three practical steps:

1. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) for support and to find out about resources in your area. You can also urge the family member to call the hotline him or herself for support. It's accessible around the clock.
2. Reduce easy access to dangerous substances at home. That includes:
 - Firearms - Because firearms are the most lethal among suicide methods, it is particularly important that you remove them until things improve at home, or, second best, lock them very securely. Please see below for further information on removing and storing firearms.
 - Medications - Don't keep lethal doses at home. Your doctor, pharmacist, or the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) may be able to help you determine safe quantities for the medicines you need to keep on hand. Please see below for more information on how to dispose of excess medications safely. Be particularly aware of keeping **prescription painkillers** (such as oxycodone and methadone) under lock and key both because of their lethality and their potential for abuse.
 - Alcohol - Alcohol can both increase the chance that a person makes an unwise choice, like attempting suicide, and increase the lethality of a drug overdose. Keep only small quantities at home.
3. There are also steps you can take to help a family member who is feeling suicidal or has recently attempted suicide. Please visit the websites listed below for more information.

Questions on Removing and Storing Firearms:

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/recommendations/families/index.html#Questions>

Medication Disposal:

http://www.mmc.org/mmc_body.cfm?id=4535

<http://www.samhsa.gov/rxsafety/>

Helping a Family Member:

http://www.helpguide.org/mental/suicide_prevention.htm

<http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/SVP-0159/SVP-0159.pdf>